

O 231125Z JUN 09  
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5164  
NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY  
USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY  
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCPA PRIORITY

UNCLAS BEIRUT 000690

STATE FOR NEA/ELA - LAWSON, NEA/ELA - IRWIN, NEA/PPD, R,  
INR/R/MR, INR,  
NSC - MCDERMOTT

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [KMDR](#) [OPRC](#) [KPAO](#) [KISL](#) [KPAL](#) [LE](#)  
SUBJECT: Lebanon: Media Reaction - June 23, 2009

Atmospherics:

The Lebanese press has been giving top billing to the ongoing events in Iran. A number of newspapers are even reporting on what is happening in Iran above the fold and on local Lebanese issues below the fold. Editorialists, however, continue to focus on local issues - or try to analyze what is happening in Iran from a Lebanese point of view.

Selected Headlines

"Iran's Guards Threaten to 'Firmly Confront' Protests; Basij Forces Attack Demonstrators in Central Tehran" English-language, Beirut, based The Daily Star

"Iran's Guards Warn the Demonstrators: Expect a Revolutionary Response if Objections Continue" Pro-Syria Ash-Sharq

Block Quotes:

"Obama, Netanyahu, Khamenei: Where are the Arabs...?" an editorial by Suleiman Takieddine in Arab nationalist As-Safir (6/23):

"The Iranian crisis started to lessen after Khamenei delivered his speech. He clearly supported the legitimacy of President-elect Ahmadinejad and tried to contain the opposition by praising the role of its leaders. ...When violence continued on the streets of Tehran...the Iranian security forces started to use violence against the demonstrators. ...What is more important, however, is the Iranian accusations against the United States and the West. ...The accusations were general in Khamenei's speech, then escalated in Ahmadinejad's statements and reached their peak during the press conference that was held by the Iranian Foreign Minister. President Obama's position, however, was extremely calculated to the extent that Obama did not really find differences between Ahmadinejad and Mousavi. As for Europe, it...supported the Iranian reform movement. ...Obviously, the European position backfired against the opposition in Tehran and did not help the Iranians to reach a settlement. ... The West should have understood that Ahmadinejad's victory was an indication of the fact that the real authority in Iran finds him successful in the confrontation against the West and the Americans in particular. ...Removing Ahmadinejad from power at this point in time would have been interpreted as a sign of weakness..."

"Iran, Arabs Are Involved in What is Going On," an editorial by Ali Hamade in moderate, anti-Syrian An-Nahar (6/23):

"...The Basij(the Iranian Revolutionary Guard) may implement its threats of 'revolutionary response' against the demonstrators, and drown them in a sea of blood...but the crisis will continue. There is no doubt that Iran has changed. ...The aura of the Iranian regime has failed. The aura of the Sayyed himself has failed.

...We as Arabs should have a say in what is happening in Iran. It is true that what is happening in Iran is the Iranian's business. ...Free Arabs in Beirut and other cities, however, are in a way involved in what is going on..."

Sison